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STAFF NOTES:

# Middle East Africa South Asia

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# Tunisia-Libya

Status of Unity Declaration

Prospects for implementation of the Tunisian-Libyan Declaration of Union, signed more than a year ago by both sides on the Tunisian island of Djerba, are extremely poor and will remain so as long as the present Tunisian power structure is in office. Publicly, Presidents Qadhafi and Bourguiba continue to talk of a "cooperative spirit" between the two countries, but privately, movement toward a union has been hampered by Libyan impulsiveness and Tunisian apprehension and foot dragging.

Qadhafi's concern over Libya's lack of human resources and the likelihood that its oil reserves will be exhausted in little over a decade partially explains his quest for union, first with Egypt in 1972 and then with Tunisia. Although Qadhafi's near-mystical unity pitches have often obscured these practical considerations, the Libyan leader recognizes that his country needs a reliable, cooperative economic alliance with a neighboring state. Such an alliance, he believes, would also enhance his own stature in the Arab world and among other Third World countries.

Qadhafi is ready to aid any group in Tunisia that favors implementation of the declaration, which was signed in January 1974. He has been encouraged by the economic and philosophical appeal the merger has for many Tunisians.

Some Tunisian intellectuals, especially those from the south, look to Libya as a potentially lucrative job market. This group, already suffering from high unemployment, is well aware of Libya's lack of trained manpower and its inability to operate and manage its petroleum industries. Qadhafi's need to broader Libya's economic base has already created an expanded job market for Tunisians and other foreigners.

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A second group of Tunisians has provided Qadhafi with grass-roots support for unity. The Djerba Declaration adroitly includes, at Qadhafi's request, the word "Islamic" in the proposed name for the union-the Arab Islamic Republic. This symbol, coupled with Qadhafi's stand on established Muslim tenets, appeals to those Tunisians who are disenchanted with the path Bourguiba has chosen to westernize the country. "anti-secularists," who are not a part of the Tunisian power structure, view the proposed merger with Libya as a way to return Tunisian society to a more classical They prefer a course to modernity that form of Islam. preserves Islamic religious practices, something Algeria apparently has accomplished. The views of this group--generally the uneducated masses--are not reflected by the power structure, which consists of professionals with influential family ties.

It was this power structure, headed by Prime Minister Nouira, that effectively nullified Bourguiba's actions at Djerba by interjecting constitutional restrictions and creating committees to study the long-term effects of the proposed union. The official Tunisian explanation for delaying implementation of the declaration is that the constitution must be revised before a referendum can be held to determine whether the Tunisian people want a merger with Libya. Qadhafi charges the delay is the work of factions within Tunisia's government seeking influential positions in preparation for the day Bourguiba passes from the scene.

Qadhafi's obvious dissatisfaction with Tunisia's delaying tactics has heightened apprehension in Tunis about Libya's intentions. Tunisia is extremely sensitive to Libya's military procurements and to reports of Libyan military base construction close to the common border. This and the belief that Libya has provided Tunisian dissident groups with military training has prompted a keener vigil by Tunisian authorities for signs of unrest. Student demonstrations have attracted special attention.

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Tunisia will apparently continue to resist Libya's efforts to force implementation of the Djerba declaration in the near future and will formally bury the idea when Bourguiba dies. In the interim, Tunis has been cultivating closer ties with Algeria as a counterbalance to Libyan pressure for a union.

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# Afghanistan

Recognition of South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government

Afghanistan has formally recognized the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. The announcement followed a two-day visit to Afghanistan last week by the provisional government's "foreign minister," Madame Binh.

	The Afghan move may have been stimu- lated by the recent US policy decision permitting the resumption of arms sales to Pakistan, Kabul's major adversary.	25X1
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	has criticized the US policy decision, although both countries' protests have been relatively restrained.	
5X1	The Afghan announcement clarifies Kabul's heretofore confusing relationship with the provisional government. President Daoud's government, after taking power in 1973, informed the US embassy it was continuing the previous regime's policy of recognizing the provisional government rather than Saigon. Last year, however, the foreign ministry told our embassy that Afghanistan had no relations with "any Vietnams." More recently, Kabul described its policy toward the provisional government over the past several years as one of "de facto," but not "de jure," recognition.	25X1

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